

What Every African-American Man Should Know About Diabetes



*Michigan Department
of Community Health*



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African-American men often don't like to talk about their health problems. They may not see a doctor until serious problems have developed. This makes prevention of illness and treatment difficult.

Understanding more about your body and how it works can help you develop a healthy lifestyle. This can prevent illness or disease. The major risky health behaviors are smoking, alcohol and substance abuse, lack of exercise, poor diet, unsafe sex and not wearing seatbelts in cars. These are things that can lead to illness, disability, and death.

African-American men are facing an increasing rate of death from diabetes. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death for black males in Michigan. Diabetes, commonly referred to as "sugar", is a chronic disease that is caused by abnormal insulin production in the body. It is also linked to increased risk of heart attack, blindness, amputations, and kidney failure. Most people with diabetes do not have symptoms. You can have it for years and not know it. That's why it's important to get tested for diabetes. If you have any of the following symptoms, you should call your doctor or other health care provider right away: frequent urination, extreme thirst, increased hunger, blurred vision, weight loss, or fatigue.

Risk Factors:

Risk factors that can be changed are overweight, lack of exercise and poor diet. Risk factors that can't be changed are age, race-ethnicity and family history of diabetes.

What You Can Do:

Regular testing for diabetes can show early symptoms. A healthy lifestyle can also reduce your chances of getting diabetes. That includes controlling your weight, eating a balanced diet with fruits and vegetables, stopping smoking and exercising regularly.

You Can Make the Difference:

Staying informed about your health and avoiding risky health behaviors are vital in fighting the health problems black men face today. Develop a plan that works best for you.

